

Montgomery Cares Advisory Board

December 9, 2020 Meeting Notes

MCAB Members Present: Betsy Ballard, Kathy Deerkoski, Julia Doherty, Sarah Galbraith-Emami, Dr. Travis Gayles, Sybil Greenhut, Lynda Honberg, Yuchi Huang, Ashok Kapur, Peter Lowet, D. Maria Rice, Diana Saladini, Langston Smith, Wayne Swann

MCAB Members Absent: Sharron Holquin

DHHS Staff: Tricia Boyce, Magda Brown, Tara Clemons, LaSonya Kelly, Robert Morrow, Christopher Rogers, Rebecca Smith

Primary Care Coalition: Marisol Ortiz, Aisha Robinson, Hillery Tumba

The Chair, Wayne Swann, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. Meeting held via video/teleconference during COVID-19 pandemic.

Item		Action Follow-up	Person Assigned	Due Date
1.	<p>Approval of Minutes – September 23 and October 28, 2020 Wayne Swann</p> <p><i>Minutes approved with edit suggestions.</i></p> <p><i>Moved by Wayne Swann</i> <i>Seconded by Julia Doherty</i></p>			
2.	<p>Montgomery Cares Advisory Board Chair Report Wayne Swann</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayne highlighted the agenda items and noted that the HHS Committee Breakfast had taken place November 18 and 19th. During the November 19th session, the MCAB was given the opportunity to present their position statement and identify their top 2 or 3 priorities. Wayne mentioned that this was a great opportunity to hear from some of the other boards and commissions in areas of potential synergy with the Commission on Health, Commission on Behavioral Health, and the three health initiatives. • During the Committee breakfast, Chairman Albornoz mentioned holding a healthcare summit in January in anticipation to relative changes in administration. • Wayne noted that some members have shown interest in having the MCAB monthly meeting time permanently moved to 4:00-6:30 just like it was done for the strategic planning meeting. There was a consensus to have the time changed to 4:00-6:30 pm starting with the January meeting. This will be evaluated again once in person meetings are to take place again. 	County staff will update the time on the County public calendar	Tara C.	ASAP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayne wanted to note that in addition to Sybil’s retirement, Dr. Rice has moved thus forth resigning from the Board. Wayne acknowledged her hard work and the contributions she’s made for the MCAB programs and administration. 			
3.	<p>COVID-19 Updates</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. Travis Gayles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Gayles wished Dr. Rice the best of luck in her future endeavors and thanked her for her service. He also noted that the County has seen a significant increase in the number of cases. He mentioned that the second wave is here and has been present for a while. He also noted that for a sometime there was not a comparable increase in hospital utilization but that has since changed. Dr. Gayles mentioned that the County’s averaged two to four of the six hospitals being at capacity in the red level on a daily basis. There’s been some highlights in terms of increased testing across the County. Montgomery County has outpaced any other jurisdiction in terms of the number of tests across the counties in general, but in particular, the tests that are part of the County platform including those provided through Public Health Services, the Minority Health Initiative and community partners. The County has implemented a series of restrictions that are guided by contact tracing data, as well as the mathematical modeling from the County’s academic partners that provided recommendations on curbing certain activities or implementing certain restrictions that will hopefully help bring numbers back to lower levels. Part of the challenge is despite the guidance that has been put forward, there is still an issue with individual behavior. There were recommendations not to travel over the Thanksgiving holiday and to minimize gatherings however, the data shows that people did not adhere to the guidelines. Vaccines - One produced by Pfizer and the other by Moderna. The Pfizer vaccine is scheduled for their EUA hearing tomorrow and if approved, the vaccine will most likely begin to be administered as early as next week. Vaccine distribution - Individuals identified in 1A are healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities will be first. There will be a priority placed on nursing homes, at least in the initial distribution of those samples. It is speculated that private providers will receive vaccines starting at phase two. He noted that the County is still awaiting clarification on that from the state as well as further clarification on the 1B category which first line responders are included in 1A and 1B but also more critically in the 1B category is the idea that individuals with certain medical conditions, would be available to get the vaccine. Dr. Gayles explained that the County is waiting for further clarification upon what that actually means and how those categories will be broken down. Part of the challenge is managing the limited supply. He further explained that if the Pfizer vaccine is approved tomorrow, the first distribution of vaccine will be about 6 million doses across the whole country and approximately 155,000 doses being delivered to the state of Maryland. 			

	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter wanted to understand how the board could be both, supportive, and advisory (vaccine). He wanted to know if there's anything the board can do on the vaccine distribution front. Dr. Gayles thanked Peter for his support and explained that the first thing is recognizing the outreach, and the Board member's position and place in different community organizations, He reminded the board members that they are all key stakeholders within their representative communities and explained that this is going to play an important role in terms of being able to provide education and outreach to the different formal and informal groups that they may be a part of. • Dr. Gayles explained that the MCPS side is a little trickier and metrics are currently being debated. He explained that what they have tried to do is put in restrictions to drive the numbers down again. He noted that they are continuing to review best practices. He stated that he thinks that the school board has put forward; they have prioritized children with special needs and also children who are younger in the elementary school settings. • Lynda questioned if there was a plan in place to ensure that people return for the second dose of the vaccine. Dr. Gayles explained that yes, there is a plan, and he would encourage board members to look at the state's plan. He explained that part of it will be addressed by the utilization of different systems to schedule people and track them. He noted the importance of education outreach, making sure people in the community understand why it's necessary to get both doses • Dr. Gayles also wanted to highlight the team, Dr. Roger, Tara and others. He explained that funding was received from the Office of Minority Health from MDH to put together COVID-19 emergency kits. The team executed the grant and got approximately 4,000 emergency kits that have thermometers, gloves, masks, hand sanitizers and some other things. These kits will be distributed over the next several weeks at the hubs throughout the county and food distribution sites. So, kudos to the team for executing that much needed resource. 			
4.	<p>Health Care for the Uninsured Report See Report and handout</p> <p><u>Monthly Status Report</u></p> <p>Tara reviewed the data for the Health Care for the Uninsured programs and noted a few County Updates:</p> <p>County Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tom Hucker was elected President (replacing Sidney Katz) and Gabe Albornoz was elected Vice-President (replacing Tom Hucker) as of Dec 1st. President Hucker is prioritizing containment of the COVID-19 health crisis, recovery of our local economy, and protecting the most vulnerable residents. He will also work with his colleagues to continue the Council's efforts to increase attainable housing options, strive for racial justice, and respond to climate change. 	Tara Clemons		

Montgomery Cares has served 10,330 patients through October with a total of 18,323 patient visits (in-patient and telehealth) at the ten participating clinics. The clinics expended 25% of the FY21 budgeted amount for encounters, the benchmark for October is 33%.

- In following suit with the Md Department of Human Services' automatic date extension of social service programs ([https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/COVID-19/RedetFlyer_Oct_Recertification%20\(1\).pdf](https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/COVID-19/RedetFlyer_Oct_Recertification%20(1).pdf)), DHHS is suspending eligibility processing for Montgomery Cares. As of November 1st, Montgomery Cares participants' eligibility will be automatically extended for six months. For example, if a client's eligibility end date is 12/15/20, their new eligible end date is 6/15/21.

Care for Kids program enrollment through October 2020 is 5,804 which is a 15% increase over the same time last year. Although monthly enrollment stays high (retention in the program), numbers for new patients and renewals are significantly down (-87%).

- Marisol Ortiz, Director of Client Services, will present program utilization and COVID-19 updates today.

The Maternity Partnership Program's enrollment through November was 513 teens and women, a 26% decrease in enrollment compared with FY20. We are estimating to serve 1,350 women by the end of the FY. The program is funded to serve 1,652 for FY21.

- DHHS is working closely with the Office of Procurement to finalize the new open solicitation. The new solicitation will allow hospitals *and* Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) located in Montgomery County to participate in MPP providing prenatal care
- During COVID-19, we are prioritizing health literacy with patients and ongoing communication between the hospitals and program staff.

Dental Services

- Operating Status - All dental clinics are open. Rockville and Silver Spring-Fenton are open for all procedures including specialty appointments with the Pediatric Dentist and Oral Surgeons. Germantown (5 days per week), Metro Court (3 days per week) and Dennis Ave-HIV Dental Program (4 days per week) for emergencies and limited procedures.
- Referrals with community partners such as NIH-Periodontal Research Program and UMD School of Dentistry Universities at Shady Grove have begun now that these facilities are open and accepting patients. Qualified patients can receive dental treatment the county cannot provide at discounted rates.

The **Homeless Health** program had a total of 278 patient visits through Oct., a 527% increase compared to FY20.

- Seen the number of homeless families in shelter drop to the lowest number in years. The County committed over \$20 million in funds to households impacted by COVID 19
- Exited over 350 adults and children from homelessness so far in 2020
- Continue to see an increase in homeless clients in general, clients with significant and complex medical and behavioral health conditions, increase in substance use and overdoses and homelessness among seniors. The program is making efforts to provide adequate space to accommodate the increase in need

	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Montgomery Cares QHP Eligible clients will also have their date extended by 6 months from 12/31/2020 until 6/30/2021 and a letter will be mailed out to them. • Julia wanted to know what would happen come July when all clients come up for renewal at the same time. Tara explained that it is a rolling 6 months so, not everyone will expire at the same time. Julia also mentioned that this would be a great opportunity for the eligibility workgroup to get back together again. • Lynda wanted to clarify if the process was reverting to the way it used to be. Tara explained that eligibility has been suspended, and clinics don't need to collect any formal documentation. They are required to question if individuals are eligible based on the requirements of the program. • Julia wanted to clarify that the clinics were not being discouraged from continuing to collect information. Tara explained that all communications expressed that but ultimately it is a choice, and the County doesn't have a priority either way (during COVID-19). The goal is access to care and if clinics can collect information, that's fine but if not, it should not be a barrier to care. • Tara mentioned that Dr. Boyce will provide the board with updated data at the January meeting. • Julia wanted to know when the data for eligibility can be made available to the workgroup. Tara explained that at the moment the majority of the conversation is focused on OESS taking over eligibility for the Montgomery Cares program. In terms of data, Tara highlighted that this has been placed on hold because of the OESS piece. She further explained that the data requested is not easy to gather and there are limitations to putting it together. Wayne suggested that it might be beneficial to have another meeting with Dr. Rogers. Wayne noted he would set the meeting up. Julia also noted that she would then set up a meeting the eligibility workgroup. 			
5.	<p>MCAB Board Development</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Julia Doherty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia informed the Board that Dr. Smith and Sarah had volunteered to be part of the workgroup. • Sarah provided a summary of the notes from the board development planning workgroup meeting. • Suggestion - using board meeting time differently and one suggestion was getting packets in advanced or sharing reports in advance to free up some time. • There is also a need for clarity regarding the roles of the current committees and a desire to understand MCAB's decision making process and the committee's role • The workgroup will provide some recommendations in February at the MCAB Meeting for further discussion. • To have an ongoing list of board members and committee participation to review each program • The group also noted that they would like to have a short review of the County's budget cycle and an understanding of the County Council's role • Sarah also mentioned that there were two pressing considerations: One is the new board member orientation, there was a suggestion that this is made available to all members not only new ones. Second to clarify the current committee membership because there's some confusion about who is on which committee. 			

	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayne brought up the issue that the mission of Montgomery Cares is basically sunseting, December 31st and so it is timely to talk about the purpose. A proposal needs to be made back to the Council to continue MCAB's existence. Wayne also noted that he looks forward to the recommendations the group will come up with for the February meeting. Julia asked if a larger block of time could be allocated for the February meeting. All board members agree that having the necessary data is essential and no decisions can be made without good data. Diana Saladini will chair the data infrastructure committee. Wayne will schedule the first meeting with Dr. Rogers Yuchi will participate in the board development committee 			
6.	<p>Care for Kids report See Report and handout</p> <p>Enrollment Updates:</p> <p>Number of Participants: – FY20 – 6,230 children – FY21: As of 11/30/2020 – 5,836 children • Projection by 6/30/2020 - 6,099 children</p> <p>New enrollment (7/1/2020 to 11/30/2020): – FY20 - 1,293 children – FY21 – 142 children</p> <p>Renewal enrollment – Care for Kids has two years eligibility started on 7/1/2018. – FY21 – it is the 1st time that participants approved in FY19 needs to renew. • 3,600 children need to renew for the program – FY21- 201 children</p> <p>Inactive children – FY21 – 1007 children • Reason: Lack of renewal</p> <p>Enrollment Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Pandemic Technology Challenges OESS Application Process & required documentation 	Marisol Ortiz		

Enrollment Efforts

- The number of children renewing decrease dramatically in FY21.
- Care for Kids provides information to OESS about the clients that needed to renew between 7/1/2020 to 10/31/2020.
- Care for Kids and OESS continues discussion of the enrollment ‘s challenges and possible solutions.

Marisol provided the utilization information as well as a listing of the Care for Kids providers and the current accessibility of services

COVID-19 Pandemic & Environmental Impact

- Decrease in the number of new children arriving at the County.
- Closures of OESS offices that impact the eligibility & enrollment of the program.
- Decrease in the capacity at the clinics.
 - Well, visits available.
- Transitions from in-person visits to telehealth visits at clinics.
- Fear of parents that children can get contagious at the clinics.
- School Closures and Social Distancing.
- Political Environment in US & Central America.
- Natural Disasters that impact Central American Countries.

Point of Entry Project

- Partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).
- The project Community Health Coordinator will receive referrals from the MCPS International Enrollment and Admissions specialist to assess referred families on health care needs and food insecurity.
- Community Health Coordinator is currently working with seven families and continues receiving additional referrals daily.

Discussion

- Julia wanted clarification on OESS’ offices and the impact on eligibility and enrollment. Marisol explained that families prefer to complete enrollment at the OESS office in person. With offices being closed it has caused many families to not feel comfortable doing it electronically and some do not have access to the technology.
- Julia expressed her concern over the decrease in the enrollment numbers and wanted to know if there was anything that the board could do. Tara mentioned that it is not an issue of the process itself but rather the submission of documents. Tara also explained that outreach on behalf of all parties involved has taken place. PCC’s Care for Kids staff have been calling, OESS has been calling for the past months and the school health nurses are calling families as well.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Rogers asked for the board to allow him the opportunity to discuss this with all the key players so that he can provide an update to the board with a better idea of what is going on. • Julia asked that this update from Dr. Rogers be added to the January agenda 			
7.	FY22 Advocacy Priorities Committee's Breakouts MCAB Members <u>Discussion</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynda suggested that the committees met outside of the meeting time. • Tara noted that the maternal and childcare committee needed some attention. She mentioned that of the three members Dr. Mann has stepped off the board, Dr. Rice is stepping down, leaving on Dr. Ballard and it is sometimes challenging for her to attend the meetings. Tara asked that members let her know if they want to volunteer for this committee. • Peter noted that at the TROIKA meeting there was discussion about telehealth. Peter mentioned that the ACLC was in alignment with what MCAB has done in terms of a prioritized telehealth. He also noted that it was interesting that the data continues showing that the average number of visits per patient is no different than last year when telehealth wasn't available. 			
8.	Next Steps - December 2020 meeting Wayne Swann <u>Discussion</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia asked that the telehealth discussion be added to the January meeting for an update on the letter that was sent to the DHHS. Tara explained that the response letter is drafted and there have been many discussion on the topic and right now they are trying to figure out a final policy update outside of COVID <p>The next meeting will be held January 27, 2021</p>			
9.	Meeting Adjourned at 8:35 pm <i>Motion to adjourn: Wayne Swann</i> <i>Seconded: Julia Doherty and Langston Smith</i> <i>Unanimously approved</i>			

Respectfully submitted,

Tara O. Clemons
Montgomery Cares Advisory Board